

The new UAF strategic plan calls for a “renewed focus around who we are and what we aspire to be” (Chancellor White, <https://uaf.edu/strategic/>). For faculty and staff, a renewed focus is on the Paid Family Leave Initiative. The current Paid Family Leave policy for UAF staff and faculty relies on the use of accrued sick or annual leave. This “false” paid family leave is insufficient and will not lead to an increased “attract[ion] the brightest minds” to UAF’s world-class faculty and staff positions. The UAF Faculty Senate’s Committee on the Status of Women has compiled a data driven argument as to why a change to the Paid Family Leave policy at UAF is essential for the new strategic plan.

To *Solidify our global leadership in Alaska Native and Indigenous programs*, we seek to assert ourselves as leaders in Indigenous Programs, by putting core Alaska Native values, such as taking care of one another, honoring women, children, and family into practice in our own institution.

To *Achieve Tier I Research status and share new knowledge*, we seek to improve retention and recruitment of faculty which will help more PhD students graduate.

To *Embrace and grow a culture of respect, diversity, inclusion, and caring*, we seek Paid Family Leave to promote respect, diversity, inclusion, and caring by ensuring that no one’s salary is disproportionately affected by unpaid leave and by creating an environment that allows for a healthy life including a career and family.

To *further recognize that “holistic approaches to well-being of all will lead to improved health outcomes and enhanced resilience, we seek to* adopt adequate policies that provide for our UAF community will lead to a stronger, healthier, more resilient institution

MATERNITY LEAVE ACROSS THE ARCTIC

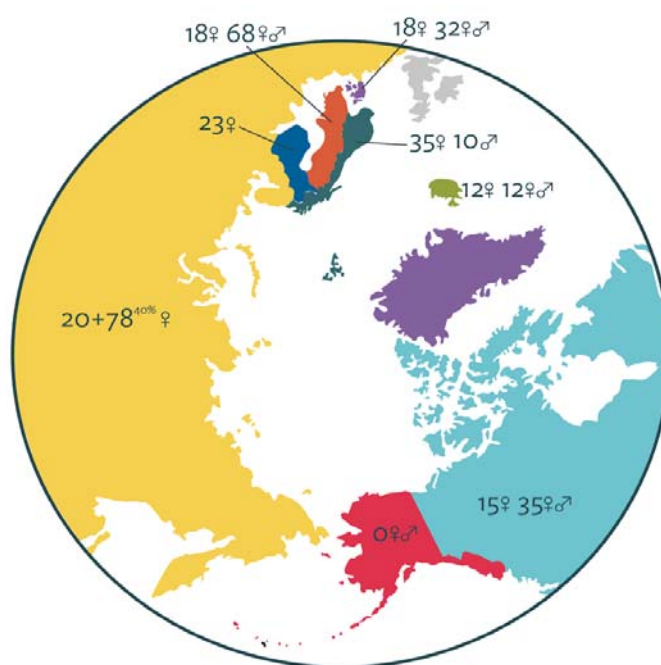


Figure 1. Maternity and paternity leave across Arctic nations in weeks. Amount of weeks followed by the female and male sign means that this portion of parental leave can be taken by either parent. After 20 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, Russian mothers can take an additional 78 weeks at 40 % pay.

Paid Family Leave has been the norm globally and is quickly becoming the standard with regards to benefits across US institutions. To remain competitive, attract and retain¹ productive faculty and staff, UA can’t afford not to have a paid family leave benefit².

Our organizational management should reflect the values our educational and research programs espouse as necessary for a strong, vibrant, healthy, productive Alaska and Arctic. As we seek to assert ourselves as leaders in Indigenous Programs and One Health initiatives, we should put these values into practice in our own institution.

¹ Whereas replacing a single employee typically costs >20% of the employee’s annual salary (CAP 2012), paid family leave policies can increase retention. For example, Google, Accenture, and Aetna reported >50% increase in retention following expansion of paid family leave programs. 77% of corporate employees responded that the amount of paid family leave influenced their choice of employer (Deloitte 2016)

² Within the US, which is already at the bottom of the spectrum among global and arctic nations for paid family leave policies, UA is at the lower end of academic institutions (Figures 1 & 2) For example, it takes a UAF employee over 5 years to accrue 4 months of “false” paid family leave (4.62 h/payroll + available FTO), an amount of time that is still at the lower end of paid family leave time in arctic nations. Candidates for faculty positions at UAF have other opportunities at universities that do offer paid leave. For example, of 205 US & Canadian universities surveyed, 60% have paid family leave policies. The average duration is 14.2 weeks for women and 11.6 weeks for men.

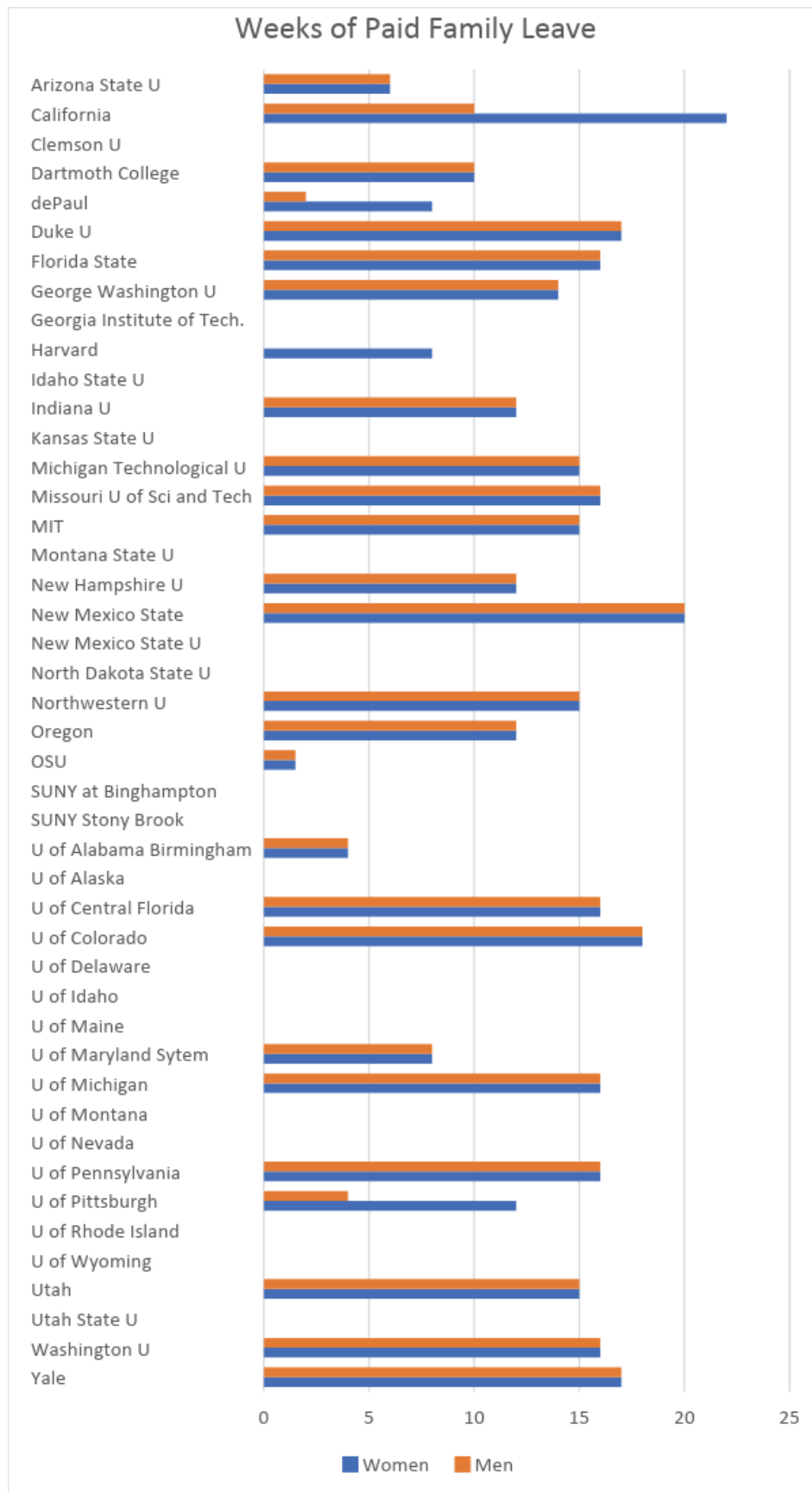


Figure 2. Amount of paid family leave (weeks) for a subset of US universities (adapted from <https://aaronclauset.github.io/parental-leave/>). A more comprehensive list and background to the study can be found here: <https://aaronclauset.github.io/parental-leave/>